

Message Text

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EXDIS

E.O.: GDS
TAGS: CI, PFOR, PINT
SUBJECT: THE UNIVERSITY AND CHILE'S CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS

1. ATTENDING A WEDDING OF RENAN FUENTEALBA'S DAUGHTER
THIS PAST SATURDAY, I HAD THE OCCASION TO TALK WITH MOST OF THE
CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP. THEY ARE DISCOURAGED. THEY
ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE JUNTA MADE A VERY SERIOUS MISTAKE IN ITS
HANDLING OF THE UNIVERSITIES.

2. THE UNIVERSITIES

I GOT THE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF THE JUNTA DECISION TO DISMISS
CHILE'S UNIVERSITY RECTORS FROM EDGARDO BOENINGER, MAXIMO
PACHECO AND DOMINGO SANTA MARIA - ALL OF WHOM ATTENDED THE KEY
MEETING OF THE RECTORS WITH THE JUNTA LAST FRIDAY. (SANTIAGO 4628
AND 4751 ALSO REPORT THESE EVENTS.) ACCORDING TO BOENINGER, HIS
POLICY MEETING WITH THE JUNTA ON SEPT 25 PRODUCED THE REQUEST THAT
HE SET DOWN THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE UNIVERSITY RECTORS COULD
REMAIN IN OFFICE AND CLEAN THEIR OWN HOUSE. BOENINGER RECALLS THAT
GUSTAVO LEIGH WAS THE ONLY MEMBER OF THE JUNTA WHO ENTERED INTO
ANY SUBSTANTIVE DIALOGUE WITH HIM AT THAT MEETING. IT WAS AND IS
HIS IMPRESSION THAT LEIGH - IN SPITE OF BEING REGARDED AS MORE RIGHT
WING AND NATIONALIST THAN THE OTHER JUNTA MEMBERS - IS ACTUALLY THE
MOST ARTICULATE, INTELLIGENT, AND POLITICALLY SOPHISTICATED OF THE FOUR.

IN ANY CASE, LEIGH LEFT BOENINGER WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT SOMETHING
COULD BE WORKED OUT, WHILE THE OTHER JUNTA MEMBERS ESSENTIALLY SAID
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NOTHING. BOENINGER NOW BELIEVES THAT HE OVERESTIMATED THE
RESPONSIVENESS OF THE JUNTA AND EXTENT OF AGREEMENT AT THE MEETING.
WHAT THE JUNTA APPARENTLY WAS DOING WAS RESERVING ITS POSITION.

3. ACCORDING TO BOENINGER AND PACHECO, THE PAPER WHICH BOENINGER PRESENTED IN RESPONSE TO THE JUNTA'S REQUEST ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ANY UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS WHO WERE ACCUSED OF HAVING COMMITTED POLITICAL OR OTHER CRIMES WOULD HAVE TO BE REMOVED, PENDING THE CLARIFICATION OF THEIR SITUATION. MARXIST PROFESSORS WOULD ALSO BE BARRED FROM ANY DIRECTIVE UNIVERSITY POSITION, SUCH AS FACULTY DEAN, ETC. HOWEVER, THE UNIVERSITIES IN GENERAL AND THE UNIVERSITY OF CHILE IN PARTICULAR COULD NOT BE IN THE POSITION

OF DISCHARGING A PROFESSOR SIMPLY ON THE BASIS OF HIS IDEAS- EVEN IF THOSE IDEAS WERE MARXIST.

4. UNIVERSITY OFFICIALS (PARTICULARLY MAXIMO PACHECO IN HIS CAPACITY AS LEGAL ADVISOR TO THE COUNCIL OF RECTORS) WERE TALKING WITH GOC OFFICIALS UP UNTIL THE HOUR OF THE RECTORS' FRIDAY MEETING WITH THE JUNTA - WITH EVERY EXPECTATION THAT THE UNIVERSITY SITUATION WAS ON THE WAY TO AN AMICABLE NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. PACHECO HAD TO BREAK OFF A MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AT ABOUT A QUARTER TO FIVE IN ORDER TO ATTEND THE MEETING WITH THE JUNTA 15 MINUTES LATER. MINISTER PRIETO GANDARA CLEARLY HAD NO IDEA THAT THE MEETING WITH THE JUNTA MIGHT BE UNFAVORABLE.

5. THE FRIDAY MEETING, THE MEMBERS OF THE JUNTA POLLED THE RECTORS, ASKING THEM IF THEY SUBSCRIBED TO BOENINGER'S MEMORANDUM. THE RECTORS EXPRESSED UNANIMOUS SUPPORT. AT THAT POINT THE JUNTA EXPRESSED UNANIMOUS DISAGREEMENT. THE POSITION OF THE JUNTA WAS THAT THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO TAKE ON THE TASK OF REORDERING THE UNIVERSITY STRUCTURE ON ITS OWN RESPONSIBILITY. APPARENTLY - LEIGH, STILL THE MOST SOPHISTICATED AND UNDERSTANDING, INDICATED FRANKLY THAT THE TASK THAT THE JUNTA THOUGHT NEEDED TO BE DONE WAS HARD AND DISTASTEFUL, AND PERHAPS IT WAS IN EVERYBODY'S INTEREST THAT THE RECTORS NOT BE ASKED TO CARRY IT OUT THEMSELVES. THE MEETING ENDED VERY QUICKLY AFTER THAT, AS THERE WAS NOT MUCH LEFT TO DISCUSS.

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6. IN DESCRIBING THE FOREGOING TO ME, BOENINGER INDICATED THAT IN PERSONAL TERMS LEIGH PROBABLY HAD BEEN RIGHT - AS BOENINGER WAS NO DOUBT BETTER OFF NOT TO BE GIVEN THE TASK THE JUNTA FELT NEEDED TO BE DONE. IGANCIO PALMA, WHO WAS STANDING WITH US, INDICATED THAT HE AGREED WITH LEIGH, AND THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE RESPONSIBLE CIVIL UNIVERSITY AUTHORITIES WERE BETTER OFF NOT PARTICIPATING IN UNIVERSITY RESTRUCTURING UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS. BOENINGER, INSPIRE OF PERSONAL CONSIDERATIONS, FELT THE JUNTA'S DECISION WAS A DEEPLY UNWISE ACTION AND MOST UNFORTUNATE FOR CHILE.

7. PDC TALKS WITH THE JUNTA

WHEN I ASKED PDC PRESIDENT PATRICIO AYLWIN IF HE HAD HAD

THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK WITH MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT, HE SAID HE HAD NOT. HE INDICATED THAT HE THOUGHT THE JUNTA DID NOT WISH TO TALK WITH "POLITICIANS." HE SAID HE THOUGHT CONTACTS WITH HIM WERE NOT DESIRED AT THIS TIME.

8. A BIT LATER IN THE WEDDING RECEPTION I RAN INTO RAUL TRONCOSO. TRONCOSO TOLD ME THAT HE HAD RECEIVED AN INFORMAL SOUNDING FROM A PERSON CONNECTED WITH THE MILITARY JUNTA, ASKING IF THE PDC WOULD LIKE TO GET INTO PRIVATE CONTACT. TRONCOSO HAD CHECKED WITH THE PARTY LEADERSHIP, AND HAD RECEIVED THE ANSWER THAT THE PDC WOULD INDEED BE DISPOSED TO TALK. THE ANSWER WAS PASSED ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, BUT THE JUNTA-AS OF SATURDAY - HAD NOT FOLLOWED UP.

9. FREI

EDUARDO FREI INDICATED TO ME AT THE RECEPTION THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH ME PRIVATELY. (I EXPECT TO BE MAKING ARRANGEMENTS TO DO THIS WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS.)
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